The True and Admirable History of

PATIENT GRISEL,

A poor Mans Daughter in *France*, and the Noble Marques of SALUS.

Shewing

How Maids by her Example in their good and vertuous Behaviour may Marry Rich HUSBANDS.

And likewise how Wives by their Patience and Obedience may gain much Glory:

Being a Pattern for all Vertuous Women.

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The pleasant and true History of Patient GRISEL, and the Noble Marquess of *Saluz*. In which is exemplified the true obedience, and noble behaviour of vertuous Women towards their Husbands.

CHAP. I.

Of the Noble Birth and Behaviour of the Noble Marquess, and how he came to effect a Wife.

BEtween the Mountains of Italy and France, towards the South, lyes the Territory of Saluz, a Country flourishing with excellent Towns and Castles, and peopled with the best sort of Gentry and Peasants: amongst whom there lived not long since a Noble-man, of great hope and expectation, Lord of the Country, by name Gualter, Marquess of Saluz; to whom, as the Government appertained by right of Inheritance, so their obedience attended by desert of his worthiness. He was young in years, noble of lineage, and of such a lovely behaviour, that the best thought it a pleasure to be commanded by him, and the worst grew more tractable by his good example. His delight was in Hunting and Hawking, and the pleasure of the time present extinguished the care of the time to come; for he thought not of marriage, nor to intangle himself with the inconveniences of a Wife, till at last the people and Noblemen of his Country, discontented to see him indisposed that way, and presaging a kinde of prosperity to themselves, by his marriage, assemble together upon a day to determine of their resolutions, choosing out for their speaker a Noble Knight, of great authority, fair demeanor, eloquent speech, and more inward with the Marquess then any of the rest, to acquaint the Noble Marquess with their minds; who being prepared, took an opportunity to acquaint the renowned Marquess with the matter, as followeth.

Most Honourable Sir, the great humanity extended towards us,

and of which I moſt eſpecially have participated, hath thus emboldened me above others, to make a further tryal of your patience, and forbearing my rudeneſs, not that there is any ſufficiency or ſingularity in me above others; but in that heretofore I have found you ſo generous towards all, I make no queſtion to finde you as gracious towards my ſelf; and in that it hath pleaſed you to accept of our love, we are prond again to be under your obedience: wherein we ſhall reſerve the more, if you now accord to our requeſt the ſooner, which is, to marry without delay. The time paſſeth, and will not be recalled; your youth intreats it, and muſt not be denyed; your Countrey importunes it, and would not be oppoſed; your neighbours deſire it, and hope to be ſatisfied: and all ſorts requeſt it, and hope it for your honour. For when age approacheth, death attends it at the heels; and no man can tell when, or how it will fall upon him. Therefore we humbly requeſt you to accept our ſupplications, which is, that we may provide by your appointment, a Lady worthy of your honour and our ſubjection. In this we are the more ſuppliant, becauſe it will redound ſo much to the good of your Countrey, and the enlarging your renown: for if it ſhould ſo fall out (which God forbid) that you die without iſſue, we may lament the loſs of our Lord, but not redreſs the complaints of the people: we want you that was all our comfort, but are ſure of diſtreſs to our everlaſting trouble. If then you either love your ſelf, or pitty us, frame a heart to this impreſſion, and leave not us to further fear and diſquiet.

When the Noble Lord had thus apprehended the petition of his loving Subjects, he reſolved to anſwer them as graciouſly as they had propounded the buſineſs with regard of duty, and ſo replyed: My deareſt friends, you have urged me to a matter, in which as yet I have been a meer ſtranger: for in nature I delight in liberty, and by cuſtom continued my pleaſures; both which muſt needs be curbed by marriage, and reſtrained by taking a Wife: notwithſtanding, I caſt away all doubts to pleaſure you, and will think of no incumbrances, ſo you may be ſatisfied. For though marriage hath many difficulties attending; eſpecially, the fear of legitimation in our Children, and ſuſpicion of that honour which lies on our Wives honeſty; yet all ſhall be overcome with this reſolution, that I ſhall pleaſe you in the ſame: for I am reſolved, if any good come for mans contentment by marriage, it is from God; to whom I ſubmit this cauſe, and pray for the good ſucceſs of your wiſhes, that I may live to maintain your peace as well as my own pleaſure: and look where-

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in my contentment ſhall enlarge mine honour, your welfare ſhall be reſpected above my life; ſo that (believe it) I will ſatisfie your demands, and apply my ſelf to the purpoſe. Onely one thing I requeſt at your hands, to take in worth my choice, and neither inſult if ſhe be a Princeſs of greatneſs, nor repine if ſhe be of mean eſtate; but love her becauſe I have loved you, and regard her howſoever, in that ſhe is my Wife: neither being curious nor inquiſitive whom I will chuſe, nor diſaffected when it is paſt remedy.

When the company had heard him out, and found him ſo willing to their ſatisfaction, they gave him thanks with one heart for his kinde admiſſion; and anſwered with one tongue, he ſhould not finde them repugnant; but they would honour his Wife as the Princeſs of the world. Thus did this new report (like a meſſenger of glad tydings) fill all the Countrey with joy, and the Palace with delight, when they underſtood their Lord would marry; and in a manner heard the time appointed: for preſently it was proclaimed through the Countrey, and a day aſſigned for all comers to come to the Court. The Nobles prepared themſelves in the beſt manner, the Ladies ſpared no coſt, either for ornaments of their bodies, or ſetting out their beauties; the Gentry flocked to pleaſe their Lord, and were brave to ſet out their own greatneſs; the Citizens were rich in their neatneſs, and handſome in their attire; the Officers were formal in their ſhowes, and ſumptuous in their attendants; the Countrey-man had his variety, and the very Peaſant his bravery: in a word, all ſorts gloried in the hope of that feſtival, and every mans expectation attended the day of the triumph. For never was ſuch a preparation in Salus before, nor ſuch a confluence of people ſeen in that Countrey; for beſides the Nobility, many forreign Princes came to celebrate this marriage, and to ſhew their own greatneſs. Savoy was near, and ſent ſome from her ſnowy hills. France as near, and ſent others from her fruitful vines. Italy not far off, and ſent many from her pleaſant fields: and the Iſlands round about kept none at home that would come. Thus were his kindred invited, ſtrangers admitted, his own people entertained, and all ſorts welcomed; but as yet no Bride was ſeen, no Woman named, no Lady deſigned, no Maid publiſhed, no Wife known: onely the preparation was much, and the expectation greater.

All this while the noble Marquis continued his hunting, and as he had accuſtomed, reſorted much to a poor Countrey Village not far from Salus, where there dwelt a poor Countrey man, named

Janicola, overworn in years, and overcome with distress. But as it happens many times, that inward graces do moderate outward discommodities, and that God seasoneth poverty with contentment and their sufficient supportation; so had this poor man all his defects supplied in the admirable comfort of one onely Daughter, so composed, as if nature determined a work of ostentation. For such was her beauty and vertue, not onely in appearance, but in reality; that it put judicious men to an extasie in the choice by comparison: but both united, did hers grace each other; and when they pretended an action, it was all to go forward to perfection. And whereas in others this temporary blessing gave wings to desire, to be seen and known abroad; in her these innated vertues allayed the heat of all manner of passion, and breakings out of frailty. The diands they had were but mean, and the diet they kept was to satisfie nature; the time was over-ruled by their stomachs, and the ceremonies they used were thanks to God, and moderation in their repasts. The utensils of the house were homely, yet handsome in regard of their cleanliness; that Bed which they had the old man lay in, and the sweet Daughter made shift with the ground: no day passed without prayers and praises to God (for it was not praise-worthy to have such grace in this disgrace:) nor any night without taking account of the day passed. Her exercise was to help her Father in the morning, and drive forth her Sheep in the day time; he was at home making of Nets, and she abroad looking to her Lambs: she was never heard to wish for any better, but to thank God it was no worse. No word of repining ever came from her mouth, or the least grudge from her heart: at night she folded her sheep, and dressed her Fathers supper: then lay they down to rest, and rested as well as in a bed of Down indeed. This was the glory of their poverty, and memory of their contentment.

But as fire will not be hid where there is matter combustible, so vertue will not be obscured where there be tongues and ears; nor could the Marquess so hallow after his Hawks and Hounds, but the report of the vertuous and fair Damsel hallowed in his ear (as fast) this wonderment; insomuch, that when it was confirmed by judicious relation, he made it no dainty to be beholding to his own experience. Which when he saw concurring with fame, the miracle brought a kinde of astonishment; which continuing the properties of such novelties, increased to meditation: and so comparing the rest with this rarity, he thought her a fit Woman to make his Wife; supposing that if she were vertuous by nature, she could not prove disсous

by education; but rather as a Diamond is a stone of the same value, whether set in Lead or Horn, it must néds be of more excellency embellished with Gold and Enamel. In which resolution he prepared his heart, and went forward with his business.

In the mean time the Court was daintily furnished, the Plate prepared, the Apparel magnificent, the Coronet rich, the Jewels precious, the Ornaments exceeding, and all things befitting the magnificence of a Prince, and the dignity of a Quéen; onely the Nobles wondered, the Ladies were amazed, the Damsels marvelled, the Gentry disputed, the people flocked, and all sorts attended to see who should possess his wealth, and be adorned with these robes. At last the nuptial day came indéed, and all looked for a Bride; but who she was the next Chapter must discover.

CHAP. II.

How after all this great preparation, the Noble Marquess of *Saluz* demanded *Grisel* of her poor Father *Janicola*, and espousing her, made her Marchioness of *Saluz*.

When all things were prepared for this glorious shew, the Noble Marquess, (as if he went to fetch his Wife indéed) took with him a great company of Earls, Lords, Knights, Esquires, and Gentlemen, Ladies and attendants; and went from the Palace into the Country towards Janicola's house; where the fair Maid Grisel knowing nothing of that which happened, nor once dreaming of that which was to come, had made her house and self somewhat handsome, determining (with the rest of her neighbour Virgins) to see this solemnity: at which instant arrived the Marquess with all his gracious company, meeting with Grisel, as she was carrying two pitchers of water to her poor Fathers house. Of whom (calling her by her name) he asked where her Father was; she humbly answered, in the house: Go then said he, and tell him I would speak with him. So the poor old man (made the poorer by his astonishment) came forth to him somewhat abashed, till the Marquess taking him by the hand, with an extraordinary chearfulness; said, that he had a secret to impart unto him: and so sequestring him from the company, spake these words. Janicola I know that you always loved me, and am resolved, that you do not now hate me; you have bén glad when I have bén pleased, and will not now be sorrowful, if I be satisfied: nay, I am sure, if it lie in your power, you will further my delight, and

not be contrary to my requeſt. For I intend to beg your Daughter for my Wife, and be your Son-in-law for your advancement. What ſayeſt thou man, wilt thou accept me for a friend, as I have appointed thee for a Father. The poor old man was ſo aſtoniſhed, that he could not look for teares, nor ſpeak a word for joy; but when the teares had end, he thus faintly replyed; My gracious Soveraign, you are my Lord, and therefore I muſt accord to your will; but you are generous, and therefore I preſume on vertue: take her a Gods name, and make me a glad father, and let that God, which raiſeth the humble and meek, make her a befitting Wife, and fruitful Mother. Why then, replyed the Marquels, let us enter your houſe; for I muſt aſk her a queſtion before you. So he went in, the company tarrying without in great aſtoniſhment; the fair maid was buſied to make it as handſome as ſhe could, and prayed again, to have ſuch a gueſt under her roof; amazed at nothing, but why he ſhould come ſo accompanied, and little conjecturing of ſo great a bleſſing approaching. But at laſt, the Marquels took her by the hand, and uſed theſe ſpeeches; To tell you this bluſh becomes you, it were but a folly; and that your modeſty hath graced your comelineſs, may prove the deceit of words, and unbefitting my greatneſs: but in a word, your Father and I have agreed to make you my Wife, and I hope you will not diſagree to take me to your Husband. For delay ſhall not intangle you with ſuſpicion, nor two dayes longer protract the kindneſs; onely I muſt be ſatisfied in this, if your heart afford a willing entertainment to the motion; and your vertue a conſtancy to this reſolution: Not to repine at my pleaſure in any thing, nor preſume on contradiction, when I determine to command. For as amongſt good Souldiers, they muſt ſimply obey without diſputing the buſineſs: ſo muſt vertuous Wives dutifully conſent without reproof, or the leaſt contradiction of a brow. Therefore be adviſed how you anſwer, and I charge you take heed, that the tongue utter no more then the heart conceits. All this while was Griſel wondering at the miracle, had not Religion told her, that nothing was impoſſible to the commander of all things; which reduced her to a better conſideration, and thus brought forth an anſwer.

My gracious Lord, I am not ignorant of your greatneſs, and know mine own baſeneſs; there is no worth in me to be your Servant, therefore there can be no deſert to be your Wife: notwithſtanding, becauſe God will be the Author of miraculous accidents, I yield to your pleaſure, and praiſe him for the fortune; onely this I will be

bold to ſay, That your will ſhall be my delight, and death ſhall be more welcome unto me, then a word of diſpleaſure againſt you.

This is ſufficient, anſwered the great Lord, and ſo moſt lovingly he took her by the hand, and brought her to the company, even before all his Peers and great Ladies; and told them, ſhe ſhould be his Wife: ſo that wherein they extended their love, reverence, and obedience toward her, he would exemplifie his regard, care, and diligence toward them. And becauſe outward ſhews do ſometimes grace befitting actions (leſt her poverty and baſeneſs might too much daunt their expectation, and ſeem diſgracious to their nobleneſs) he commanded them with a moral livelineſs to adorn her with the richeſt robes they had; ſo that it was a pleaſure to ſee, how the Ladies beſtirred themſelves: a delight to behold the ſeveral ſervices performed, the many hands about her, the jewels and pendants, the robes and mantles, the ornaments, coronets, and chains; with all other particulars and accouſtrements: but when ſhe was apparelled indeed, it was a raviſhment exceeding report, and they which ſtomached her preferment, were now delighted with her glory. Such a benefit hath beauty by nature, and graciouſneſs by nurture.

CHAP. III.

How the Marquels and Griſel were Married together.

After the Ladies had thus adorned poor Griſel with Robes befitting her eſtate, the Marquels and all the noble company returned to Salus, and in the Cathedral Church, in ſight of the people, according to the ſolemnity of religious Ceremonies, they were eſpouſed together, and with great ſolemnity returned to the Palace. Herein yet conſiſted the admiration, that no word of reproach was murmured, nor eye looked unpleaſantly upon her; for by her wonderful demeanor ſhe had gained ſo much of opinion, that the meanneſs of her birth was not thought upon, and all her graces concurring, made them verily believe, ſhe was extracted of princely lineage: no man once ſuppoſed, that ſhe could be Griſel, daughter to poor Janicola, but rather ſome creature metamorphoſed by the powers of heaven; for beſides the outward ſtatelineſs and majeſtical carriage of her ſelf, the wonderful modeſty and exact ſymmetry of her countenance, the admirable beauty and extraordinary favour of her viſage, her fair demeanour had a kinde of attraction, and her gracious words, a ſweet delivery: ſo that all that came to her were glad of their acceſs, and they which

went from her, triumphed for their good speed: yea, report extended so far, that she was not onely visited by her own Lords and Ladies with reverence, but attended on with strangers, who came from all quarters to see her, and to be beholding to their own judgements: so that if the Marquess loved her before for her own worth, he now reverenced her for others respect; the rather, because he found a blessing attending her presence, and all people pleased in the contract. For when any controversie happened betwéen himself and his Nobles, she was so nobly minded, that what she could not obtain by fair intreaty, she yet mitigated by swéet perswasion. When any unkindness happened of forreign Princes, she urged those blessings of peace, and reasoned the matter with delightsome enforcement; and when the people were either complained of, or against, he marvelled from whence she had those pretty reasons to asswage his anger, and they verily believed she was sent from heaven for their relief. Thus was she amiable to her Lord, acceptable to her people, profitable to her Countrey, a mirrour of her sex, a person priviledged by nature, and a wonder of the time, in which she did nothing out of time; so that the Marquess was rather ravished then loving, and all his subjects resolved to obedience from her good example.

CHAP. IIII.

How the Lady GRISEL was proved by her Husband, who thus made trial of her patience.

TO other blessings, in process of time, there was added the birth of a swéet Infant Daughter, that rejoyced the mother, and gladded the father; the Countrey triumphed, and the people clapped their hands for joy. For the Marquess still loved her more and more, and they thought their lives not dear for her, if occasion served. Notwithstanding all this, fortune hath still a trick to check the pride of life, and prosperity must be seasoned with some crosses, or else it would taint and corrupt us too much. Whereupon, the Marquess determined now to prove his Wife, and make trial of her vertues indéed; and so taking a convenient season, after the childe was fully weaned, he one day repaired secretly to her Chamber, and (séeming half angry) thus imparted his minde.

Although, Grisel, this your present fortune hath made you forget your former estate, and that the jollity of your life overswayeth the remembrance of your birth; yet, neither is set so with me, nor my Nobles:

Nobles: for I have some occasion of distasting, and they great cause of repining, in that they must be subject to one so base, and have still before their eyes our children of such low degree; so that though (for my sake) they rest satisfied for the present, yet are they resolved never to suffer any of our posterity to rule over them; of which, as they have disputed with me, I cannot chuse but forewarn you: therefore to prevent this discontentment between us, and to maintain that peace which must corroborate my estate, I must needs yield to their judgements, and take away your Daughter from you, to preserve their amity; the thing I know must be displeasing to nature, and a mother cannot well endure such a loss: but there is now no remedy, onely make use of your first resolutions, and remember what you promised me at the beginning of our contract.

The Lady hearing this sorrowful preamble, and apprehending the Marquels resolution, to her grief (although every word might have been as arrows in her sides) yet admitting of the temptation, and disputing with her self to what end the vertues of Patience, Modesty, Forbearance, Fortitude, and Magnanimity were ordained, if they had not subjects to work upon, and objects to look after, thus replyed.

My Lord, you are my Soveraign, and all earthly pleasures and contentments of my life come from you, as the fountain of my happiness; and therefore please your self, and (believe it) it is my pleasure that you are pleased: as for the childe, it is the gift of God and yours. Now he that gives may take away, and as we receive blessings from heaven, so must we not dote on them on earth; lest by setting our mindes too much upon them, we cannot set off our hearts when they are taken from us: onely one thing I desire, that you remember I am a mother; and if I burst not out into passion for her loss, it is for your sake I am no more perplexed; and so you shall ever finde me a Wife befitting your desires.

When the Marquels saw her constancy, and was in a manner pleased with her modest answer, he replyed not at all at that time. For his heart was full, and what between joy and fear he departed: joy, that so great vertue had the increase of goodness; fear, that he had presumed too far on such a trial; but resolved in his business, he went to put it to the adventure.

CHAP. V.

The Marqueſs ſent for his Daughter, but privately diſpoſed of her with his Siſter, the Dutcheſs of Bologna de grace; who brought her up in all things befitting the Childe of ſo great a perſon.

NOt long after this ſad conference betwæn the Marqueſs and his Lady, he called a faithful ſervant unto him, to whom he imparted this ſecrecy; and with ſeveral inſtructions, what he truly meant to do with the childe, ſent him to his Wife with an unſavoury meſſage; which yet he delivered in this manner.

I had not now come to you, moſt noble Lady, though that power commanded me, which hath my life in ſubjection, if I had not more relied upon your wiſdom and vertue, then feared death it ſelf. Therefore I crave pardon if I am diſpleaſing in my meſſage, and ſæm cruel (as it were) in tearing your fleſh from your ſides, by bereaving you of this your Daughter; for he hath appointed it that muſt not be gain-ſaid, and I am a meſſenger that cannot be denied: but yet with what unwillingneſs (God knows my ſoul) in regard that you are ſo reſpected amongſt us, that we think of nothing but what may delight you, and talk not a word, but of your merit and worthineſs.

When ſhe had heard him out, remembring the conference the Marqueſs had with her, and apprehending there was no diſputing in a matter remedileſs, eſpecially with a meſſenger, ſhe reſolved it was ordained to dye: and although ſhe muſt now (as it were) commit it to a ſlaughter-houſe, whereby any woman in the world might with good becoming have burſt out into ſome paſſion, and well enough ſhewed a diſtracted extaſie; yet recollecting her ſpirits, and reclaiming thoſe motives of nature already ſtriving in her bowels, ſhe took the childe in her arms, and with a mothers bleſſing, and ſwætned kiſſes, the countenance ſomewhat ſad, and the geſture without any violent execution, delivered it unto the fellow, not once amazed nor diſtempered, becauſe her Lord would have it ſo, and ſhe knew not how to have it otherwiſe: onely ſhe ſaid, I muſt, my friend, intreat one thing at your hands, that out of humanity and Chriſtian obſervation, you leave not the body to be devoured of beaſts or birds; for it was worthy of a Grave in her innocency, and Chriſtian burial, though ſhe were but my daughter alone.

The fellow having received the childe, durſt not tarry for fear of diſcovery (ſuch impreſſion had her words made already) but returned with

with it to his Maſter; not leaving out the leaſt circumſtance of her anſwer, nor any thing might enlarge her renown and conſtancy.

The Marquels conſidering the great vertue of his Wife, and looking on the beauty of his daughter, began to enter into a kinde of compaſſion, and to retract his willfulneſs; but at laſt, reſolution won the field of pitty; and having (as he thought) ſo well begun, would not ſo ſoon give over: but with the ſame ſecrecy he had taken her from his Wife, he ſent it away to his ſiſter, the Dutcheſs of Bologna, with preſents of worth, and letters of gratification, containing in them the nature of the buſineſs, and the manner of her bringing up; which ſhe accordingly put in practice, receiving her Niece with joy, and inſtructing her with diligence: ſo that it ſoon appeared, under what tutelage ſhe was, and whoſe daughter ſhe might be. For her pregnancy learned whatſoever they taught her, and the grace ſhe added, quickly diſcovered, that honour had confederated with nature to make her the off-ſpring of ſuch a mother.

CHAP. VI.

The Marqueſs not contented with this proof, took away alſo her Son; in which adverſity (with other additions) ſhe ſhewed an extraordinary patience.

After this tempeſt was overpaſt, the rage whereof might eaſily have broken the tender ſides of poor Griſels Bark, (for, ſhe verily believed that her Daughter was ſlain) the Marqueſs ſtill lay in wait for the trial of his Wife, watching every opportunity which might acquaint him with her diſcontentments, eſpecially, if he might underſtand whether ſhe complained of his rigorouſneſs and unkindneſs, or no, but when he not onely was advertiſed of her conſtancy, and fair demeanour, but ſaw (by experience) that ſhe was neither elevated in proſperity, nor dejected in adverſity: when he perceived ſo great a temperature betwixt the joy of her advancement, and the ſorrow for her trouble, he wondered at her conſtancy; and the rather, becauſe her love and obſervation toward him continued with ſuch ſweetneſs, and had ſuch delectable paſſages, that his heart was ſet on fire again, and he knew not how to allay the extremities of his joy. In this manner paſſed four years, wherein ſhe overpaſſed all of her kinde; and he thought it a donative from heaven to have ſuch a Wife. At laſt, nature beſtirred her ſelf again, and made her a happy mother of a fair ſon; the joy whereof led the whole

Countrey into the houſe of prayer and thankſgiving; ſo that ſhe well perceived how acceptable ſhe was to her people, and beloved of her husband. Notwithſtanding, with the ſame water that drove the mill, he drowned it, and made her ſtill believe the contrary; for after two years, that the childe was paſt the danger of a cradle, and the trouble of infancy, he took occaſion once again to inflict upon the vertuous Griſel a new puniſhment; erecting his building upon the old foundation. You know, ſaith he, what former contentions I have had with my Nobility about our Marriage, not that they can lay any imputation on you, or your worthy behaviour but on my fortune and diſaſterous affection, to match my ſelf ſo meanly: wherein yet their forward approbation was rebated, all the while we either had no children, or that they ſuppoſed, that which we had to be taken from us: all which ariſeth out of the errour of ambition, (which in a manner is careleſs of vertue) reſpecting nothing but a high progeny: ſo that ever ſince this childe was born, there hath paſſed many ſecret grudgings, and unkinde ſpeeches againſt it, as if it were a diſparagement to their greatneſs, to have a Lord of ſo mean parentage, and the Countrey to be ſubject to the Grandchilde of Janicola, whom you ſee, never ſince our marriage, they would admit to place of honour, or to overtop them by way of aſſociation; nor will ſuffer this my Gualter, though it carry the fathers name to rule over them. Therefore to allay the heat of theſe preſent fires, and to preſerve the peace of my eſtate (by preventing the miſchief of future troubles) I am reſolved to ſettle my contentment, and to deal with your ſon, as I have dealt with your daughter. And of this I thought good to adverti ſe you, as a preparative for patience, leſt ſorrow ſhould diſtract you with over ſuddenneſs.

Now you Ladies and Dames of theſe times, that ſtand upon tearms of ſpirit and greatneſs of heart (ſome will have it courage and magnanimity of minde) that are affrighted at the character of a fool; and ſilly poor ſoul, I ſpeak not of Strumpets, or of ſuch as are willing to brand themſelves with the impurity of uncleanneſs, and dare out of impudency or cunning tell their husbands to their faces, they will go where they liſt, and do what they pleaſe; but of ſuch that under that impregnable target of honeſty are yet ſo impatient at every diſtemperature, that they dare anſwer taunt for taunt: yea like Virago's indeed, offer the firſt blow, though a horrible confuſion follow; what would you have anſwered this Lord? or with what fire-works would you have made your approaches unto him; I will not tarry for

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your answer, lest I pull the old house in pieces, and so though I scape the timber, I may be crushed with the rubbish; but I will now anticipate(or prevent) all objections, by telling you what fair Grisel said: and if there be hope of reformation, insert it as a caution, to divert you from your natural fierceness.

When she had heard him out, though to the grief of her soul, she conceived the murther of her childe, and that the apprehension renewed the sorrow of her Daughters loss: yet would she give no way to such distemperature, that either he should have cause to suspect her patience, or she her self the temptation of disquiet; and therefore thus replyed: My Lord I have many times told you, that my soul rejoyceth in nothing but in your repossedness, for you are the Lord of me and this infant; and though I could be contented to shew my self a mother in his education, and bring him now and then unto you as a pledge of our loves, yet are you the commander of my wishes, and I will rectifie all disordered appetites by the rule of your pleasure. Take him then, and if he be marked for death, it is but the common brand of all creatures: nay, if the mother may be a sacrifice of propitiation to appease your disquiet, never was lamb so meek, nor so willing to be offered. For, what may be comprehended under the titles of father, kindred, children, friends, life, pleasure, honour, and contentment, are all comprised under your love, and the society of a husband. Do with me then what you please, the body shall serve your turn while it lives, and the soul attend you after death.

Here was an answer to pacifie the Tyrants of Sicily, and put a man quite out of his tract of proving such a wife; yet the Marquess onely made use of it to rejoyce in the assurance of her goodness, and went the rather forward in his dangerous course of temptation.

CHAP. VII.

The Marquess resolute to prove his Wife further, sendeth for his Son, and disposeth of him as he had done of his Daughter.

As this patient and wonderful Lady was one day sporting with her infant, like an untimely tempest (spoiling the beauty of some new rooted plants) did this messenger of death interpose himself between the recreation, making the hollow demand of her Son worse then the noise of a screech-owl over a sick mans bed, yet (as if there were a conscience in disquieting her greatness, or if you will, her goodness) he came forward with preambles and apologies, insinuating

ruating with craving pardon the authority of a Lord, the duty of a Servant, the terror of Death, the circumſtances of obedience, and all other enforcements which might either excuſe a meſſenger, or make the meſſage it ſelf without blame. What ſhould I enlarge a diſcourſe of terrour? it is a courteſie to conclude a miſchief with quickneſs: he was not ſo ſudden in his demand, as ſhe was ready in her diſpatch; for ſhe preſently bleſt the Childe, kiſſed it, adorned it, and delivered it to the Executioner: onely with the ſame enforcement ſhe pleaded, as ſhe had ſpoken of in the behalf of her Daughter; not to ſee it periſh for want of a burial, or debourſed for want of a grave.

In this manner, and with this report he returned to his Lord, who had ſtill more cauſe of amazement, and leſs reaſon to trouble ſuch a creature, had not his willfulneſs put him forward to make an end of his buſineſs, and taught him ſtill variety of trying this Gold in the fire. But for the time, he ſent likewiſe this Childe to his ſiſter, the Dutcheſs of Bologna, who, underſtanding her brothers mind, brought up both theſe children in ſuch a faſhion, that though no man knew whoſe Children they were, yet they imagined whoſe they might be; that is, the ſon and Daughter of ſome Prince, or other Potentate, willing to have his Children brought up to the beſt purpoſe, and befitting their birth and honour.

The ordering of this buſineſs in this ſort, made the Marqueſs once again ſettle himſelf in Salus, where he kept open houſe to all commers; and was proud of nothing ſo much, as the honour of his Wife, and the love of his people: for although he had thus tried her patience and conſtancy, giving her more then ſufficient cauſe of anguiſh and perturbation, yet could he not finde fault, or had the leaſt demonſtration of offence, but ſtill ſhe loved him more and more; and was ſo ſervingly dutiful, and cautelous of diſpleaſure, that many times he grew enamored of that he might command, and ſeemed paſſionate in the diſtractions of over-joy. Nor could the length of time make this love wearieſom, for all they had lived thus a dozen years together: onely ſhe got the hand of him in the opinion of the people, who by this time began to whiſper againſt his unkindneſs, that had married ſo vertuous a Woman, and bereaved her of two Children, ſo that if they were ſlain, it was a murther; if otherwiſe, it was unkindneſs. For though ſhe were poor Janicola's Daughter by birth, yet ſhe might come from Heaven for her vertue; and was ſure to go thither for her piety. Notwithſtanding theſe breakings out, which

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came often to the ears of his Honour, such was her moderation and his government, that they onely whispered the same in her behalf, and contented themselves with the expectation of future good, as they had the fruition of present happiness; not medling with the same further, then in the commiseration of her, and still acknowledging their duty to him: so that although he knew she might this way understand his former reasons of taking away her children, that it was but a device, and that there were some other motives which procured this unkindness; yet was he still obstinate to exercise her patience, and conceit beat out another plot of offence on the anvil of a loding, yet most hardened heart.

CHAP. VIII.

The Marquess to try his Lady further, made her believe he would marry another Wife.

SOme dozen years were passed, since the Marquess of Saluz had sent his Daughter to Bologna, to his sister, who by this time grown to that beauty, comelinesse, and perfection, that her fame dulled all Europe; and the Lady Grisel her Mother was made acquainted with her excellency; whereupon he very cravingly sent to Rome, by a messenger of trust, for counterfeit letters to marry his Paragon, and to be dispensed from his first Wife: Which was so effectually dispatched, that the messenger soon returned with the approbation of his request, and he himself had many allegations in readiness to excuse the matter, intimating the good of the Countrey, and the continual desire of his people for the alteration; which although it was far from probability, because they pitied their Ladies distress, and rather repined against their Lords unconstancy, yet it served his turn for the time, and he thereupon erected the frame of this second Marriage. By this time is fair Grisel acquainted with the business, and troubled at the misfortune; but having many times played the wanton with affliction, she resettled her self to endure whatsoever should be imposed: so that when she came to prove indeed, nothing affronted her constancy, nor humbled her lower, then her own vertue had taught her the way.

In the mean while the Marquess had under-hand sent to his sister to bring him his children with all the pomp and glory they could prepare, with caution, not to discover their names, and to be at a day appointed

pointed at Salus; ſo that it paſſed for current all over the Country, that a young, brave, and gallant Lady, of great Lineage, and greater worth, of high renown, and mighty Affinity was coming into Salus, to be eſpouſed to the Marquis; and that they were already come out of Bologna de Grace a whole days Journey forward, with ſuch a troop, and company, that here was a ſhew of magnificence, and a ſpectacle of delight. For amongſt the reſt, there was a young Lord, not fully eight years old, whoſe bravery and gallantneſs drew all mens eyes with admiration toward him, had not the Lady divided the gazing, and ſhared with their opinion. For, beſides her riches and outward ornaments, her youth (as not fully thirteen) and upright comelineſs, her beauty, and gracious behaviour, ſhe was of extraordinary ſtature and majeſtick preſence.

Theſe things thus diſpoſed and handſomely carried, the Marquels took an opportunity thus to ſpeak to the diſconſolate Griſel before all his people: In times paſt I confeſs you deſerved my love, and notwithſtanding the diſparity betwixt us, I thought it well beſtowed upon you; nay, I cannot now impute any ill deſert unto you: notwithſtanding, for ſome reaſon to my ſelf beſt known, I am reſolved to take another Wife; who as you hear, is on the way hitherward already: therefore I would adviſe you to retire to your fathers Cottage, till you hear further from me.

Alas, my Lord, replied the ſweet ſoul, I ever diſputed the matter with reaſon, that there was no equality betwixt ſo great magnificence and my humiliation; and in the greateſt aſſurance of my proſperity, reputed my ſelf a ſlave and handmaid, proud of nothing but my own readineſs to be at your command, and your willingneſs to employ me in your affairs: ſo that I take God to my witneſs, I ſcarce truſted my ſelf with the name of a Wife, when I was in the beſt aſſurance, therefore I muſt acknowledge what you have heretofore vouchſafed, as a part of great bounty, and the very fruits of your generouſneſs. As for returning to my poor Fathers houſe, I am moſt willing; and there, as you pleaſe, like a forlorn will ſpend the reſt of my dayes; yet remember I was your Wife eſpouſed orderly, and you have had children by me; ſo that if I there dye, I muſt yet dye the widdow of ſuch a Lord, and for honours ſake be ſo reputed. As for your new Spouſe, God grant her many dayes of comfort, and you many years of joy, that you may live in reciprocal delight one with another, and entertain no worſe contentment, then poor Griſel accuſtomed. As for my

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Dowry I brought, I brought onely my self, and will have no more back again; which was, faith, love, reverence, poverty, and virginity: for as I came naked from my Fathers house, I am contented to return so again. Your Jewels are in the Wardrobe, and even the Ring you married me withal in the Chamber: of this I wear, I shall quickly be disrobed, and if there be any further misery appointed, my patience can endure it, if your pleasure impose it; onely in recompence of my virginity. I request a poor smock to hide that Womb from publick over-looking, that was once so private to so great a Prince; and because it was the bed of your Infants, let it not be the scorn of your people; but give me leave thus to go out of the Palace, that hereafter times may wonder, how quietly a woman yielded to so great a change. Nay, let no man shed a tear, I must be more naked then so; for though the Wife of a Marquess while I lived, and the Widow when I died, yet am I not to goe for a Grave, but in despight of pride must return to dust and ashes.

Did I say before, they began to weep? I can assure you, when she had done, they reared out-right; yea, the Marquess himself shed so many tears, that he was fain to retire, and commanded the smock she had begged to be sent unto her, that she might prosecute the enterprise, and he determine his business, as he had constantly projected.

CHAP. IX.

How Patient Grisel was disrobed of her Apparell, and restored all that she had (except one poor Smock) to the Marquess.

After this, the Marquess being resolved to shew the last act of her tryal, sent her the smock she demanded; amongst all the Lords, Knights, Ladies, and other company, she presently disrobed her self, and went so accompanied from the Palace, to her fathers Cottage; who as you have heard, (for divers reasons) was onely kept from want, but never advanced out of the same.

The company could not chuse but weep and deplore the alteration of fortune; she could not chuse but smile, that her vertue was predominant over passion: they exclaimed against the cruelty of her Lord, she disclaimed the least invective against him: they wondered at so great vertue and patience, she resolved them they were exercises befitting a modest woman; they followed her with true love and

desires to do her good; she thanked them with a true heart, and requested them to desist from any further deploring of her estate.

By this time they approached the house, and the poor old man Janicola acquainted with the hurliburly, came out to see what the matter was. And finding it was his daughter in her smock, and in so honourable a company, bemoaning her distress, he quickly left them all unspoke unto, and ran in for those poor robes, which were formerly left in the house; with which he quickly arrayed her, and told her before them all, that now she was in her right element; and kissing her, bid her welcome. The company was as much astonished at his moderation, as at her constancy, wondering how nature could be so restrained from passion, and that any woman had such grace to be so gracious; in which amaze, not without some reprehension of fortune, and their Lords cruelty, they left her to the poverty of the Cell, and returned themselves to the glory of the Palace: where they recounted to the Marquess the strangeness of the business, and the manner of the accidents, and how she continued in her first moderation and indefatigable patience: the poor Father only laughing to scorn the miseries and suddain mutability of humane condition, and comforting his Daughter in her well begun courses of modesty and reposedness.

Not long after approached the Dutchess of Bologna, with her glorious company and beautiful Lady, sending word before hand, that she would be at Saluz such a day; whereupon the Marquess sent a troop to welcome her, and prepared the Court for her entertainment: the bruit of which yet had not so equal a passage, but divers contrary opinions thus bandied themselves; some absolutely condemned the inconstancy of the Lord, others deplored the misfortune of the Lady; some repined to see a man so cruel against so great worthiness, others exemplified her praises to all eternity; some were transported with the gallant youth and comeliness of this new beautiful Virgin, others presumed to parallel the fair Grisel, but that she had stepped a little before her in years; some harped upon her great Nobility and high Lineage, others compared the former Wifes Vertue and true Wisdom; some excused their Lord, by the love to his Country, others excused the Lady, by the nature of the adversity, until the approach of the fair Virgin and the young Nobleman in her company, extinguished all former conceits, and set them to a new work, concerning this spectacle, wherein the young Lady, and her brave Brother, had such preheminence: nor knew the Duke himself, or any of

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the company on either ſide, that they were his own Children by Griſel, but meerly ſtrangers, and deſigned for this new Marriage. So the great Marquels made good ſemblance, and with his accuſtomed courtlineſs welcomed them all to the Palace.

The very next morning, (or if you will, the day before) he ſent a Meſſenger for Griſel, to come unto him in the very ſame manner as ſhe was; who protracted no time, but preſently attended her Lord: at her approach he was ſomewhat appalled; but yet ſetting (as we ſay) the beſt foot forward, he thus proceeded.

The Lady (Griſel) with whom I muſt marry, will be here to morrow by this time, and the feaſt is prepared accordingly; now becauſe there is none ſo well acquainted with the ſecrets of my Palace, and diſpoſition of my ſelf as you, I would have you, for all this baſe attire, addreſs your wiſdom to the ordering of the buſineſs, appointing ſuch officers as is befitting; and diſpoſing the rooms, according to the degrées and eſtate of the perſons: let the Lady have the priviledge of the marriage Chamber, and the young Lord the pleaſure of the Gallery: let the reſt be lodged in the Courts, and the better ſort upon the ſides of the Garden: let the viands be plentiful, and the ceremonies maintained; let the ſhows be ſumptuous, and the paſtimes as it becometh: in a word, let nothing be wanting, which may ſet forth my honour, and delight the people.

My Lord, ſaith ſhe, I ever told you, I took pleaſure in nothing but your contentment; and whatſoever might conſort to your delight, therein conſiſted my joy and happineſs: therefore make no queſtion of my diligence and duty in this, or any other thing which it ſhall pleaſe you to impoſe upon me: and ſo like a poor ſervant ſhe preſently addreſſed her ſelf to the buſineſs of the houſe, performing all things with ſuch a quickneſs and grace, that each one wondered at her goodneſs and fair demeanour, and many murmurred to ſée her put to ſuch a trial. But the day of entertainment is now come, and when the fair Lady approached, her very preſence had almoſt extinguiſhed the impreſſion of Griſels worthineſs; for ſome unconſtant humouriſts gave way to the alteration, not blaming the Marquels for ſuch a change; but when the ſtrangers were made acquainted with the Fortune of Griſel, and ſaw her fair demeanour, they could not but eſteem her a woman of great vertue and honour; being more amazed at her patience, then at the mutability of mans condition; till at laſt ſhe approached the Lady, and taking her by the hand, uſed this ſpeech.

Lady, if it were not his pleasure that may command to bid you welcome, yet methinks there is a kinde of over-ruling grace from nature in you, that must exact a respect unto you. And as for you, young Lord, I can say no more, but if I might have my desires satisfied in this world, they should be employed to wish you well, and to endeavour all things for your entertainment indeed. To the rest I afford what is befitting; desiring them, that if any deficiency amate their expectation, they would impute it either to my ignorance or negligence: for it is the pleasure of him, in whose will is all my pleasure, that in all sufficiency you should have regard and supplyment. And so she conducted them to their several Chambers, where they reposed themselves a while, till the time of dinner invited them to repast. When all things were prepared, and the solemnity of placing the guests finished, the Marquess sent for Grisel; and standing on his feet, took her by the hand before them all, erecting his body, and elating his voice in this manner: You see the Lady is here I mean to marry, and the company gloriously prepared to witness the same; are you therefore contented that I shall thus dispose of my self, and do quietly yield to the alteration?

My Lord, replyed she before them all, wherein as a woman I might be faulty, I will not now dispute: but because I am your Wife, and have devoted my self to obedience, I am resolved to delight in nothing but your pleasure; so that if this match be designed for your good, and determined by your appointment, I am much satisfied, and more then much contented. And for you Lady, I wish you the delights of your Marriage, and the honour of your Husband, many years of happiness, and the fruits of a chaste Wedlock: only gracious Lord, take heed of one thing, that you try not this new Bride as you have done your old Wife; for she is young, and peradventure of another strain, and so may want of that patience and government, which I, poor I, have endured.

Till this, he held out bravely; but nature overcoming resolution, and considering with what strange variety his unkindness had passed, he could not answer a word for tears; and all the company stood confounded at the matter, wondering what would be the end of the business, and the success of the estate. But to draw them out of their doubts, the next Chapter shall determine the controversie.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Oration of the Marquels to his Wife, and the diſcovery of her Children, to her great joy, and the contentment of all the company.

After a little reducement of his paſſion, at that time, and further meditation had diſpoſed his ſenſes to their perfect ſtate, the Marquels graciouſly anſwered.

Thou wonder of women, and champion of true vertue; I am aſhamed of my imperfections, and tired with abuſing thee. I have tried thee beyond reaſon, and thou haſt forborne me beyond modeſty: believe it therefore, I will have no Wife but thy ſelf, and when God hath thought thee too good for the earth, I will (if it be not too much ſuperſtition) pray to thee in heaven. Oh, 'tis a pleaſure to be acquainted with thy worth, and to come near thy goodneſs, maketh a man better than himſelf. For without controverſie, except thou hadſt been ſent from above, thou couldſt never have acted a goddeſſes part below: and therefore ſeeing I have uſed thee ſo unkindely heretofore, I proteſt never to diſquiet thee hereafter: and wherein my cruelty extended againſt thee in bereaving thee of thy Children, my love ſhall now make amends in reſtoring thee thy Daughter. For this my new Bride is ſhe, and this wanton her Brother: thank this great Lady (my Siſter) for their bringing up, and this man (you know him well enough) for his ſecrecy. Be not amazed at the matter, I have related a truth, and will confirm it on my Honour; only ſit down till the dinner is done, and bid the company welcome in this poor attire; for the ſun will break through ſlender clouds, and vertue ſhine in baſe array. I could much dilate the matter, but it is time to end, leſt the circumſtances will never end. This device of the Marquelles, of killing her ſo lovingly, and ſetting her down by him ſo diſcreetly, did much good. For the company had time to diſpute of the miracle, and the young Lady reaſon to prepare her obedience; which, no ſooner was the Dinner finiſhed, but ſhe as ſoon performed; nothing thought upon but joy at the matter, and wonder at the accident: every one pleaſed to ſee ſuch a unity of Goodneſs, and all delighted to have a buſineſs ſo well concluded. But ſeeing time had unclaſped a Book of ſuch follity, there was now no further diſputing: for the Ladies flocked about her to attend her into the Chamber, where

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the young Princess her Daughter was as ready as the best to apparel her: so that when she came amongst them again, she shined like the Sun after a tempest, and seemed more glorious, because her continued modesty kept her from all insulting and vain-glorious bravery.

Thus was the Marquess invested as it were with a new blessedness, and she continued in her old constancy; onely admired and reverenced for her worth, as he was esteemed and regarded for his wisdom: the Nobles applying themselves to renown his estate, and the People proud they had such a Lord to obey; especially satisfied, when the poor Janicola was advanced to his Council, and made Governour of his Palace: wherein he behaved himself so discreetly during his life, that he dyed with the memory of a good report. Grisel lived thirty years after him; and all went to their Graves in good time: the Country renowned over the World for their admirable Government, and famosed for their extraordinary wonder.

FINIS.